

live nearer to Christ and learn better his teachings, humanity is divided into classes, which are antagonistic with the fierce spirit of selfish hate. The world doesn't believe that the words of Jesus are to be taken seriously. The divine dreams of Isaiah, Hosea, Micah and David, that the time will come when the swords and spears shall be beaten into the implements of industry and that nations shall learn war no more, can never be realized until men come to believe Jesus' teaching of divine brotherhood in common life.

But that is not the worst. Terrible to contemplate, but true nevertheless, the church nerveless and spiritless and unbelieving, because of its disobedience to so many of these Christ-given and love-teaching ordinances; emptied of the conquering spirit of the early church and filled instead thereof with the spirit of cringing flattery and submission to mammon,—the church thus changed no longer believes, in reality, in the brotherhood and common life that Jesus came to establish. What does it mean but unbelief in the common life of man in this world, that there exist churches for the rich and churches for the poor, churches for the fashionable and churches for the "slums?"

What does it mean but belief in separatism, and a dis severed church life, that scarcely a congregation exists in which some people do not feel that they are above some of their fellow-communicants? Is it asked how to account for it? Simply by the fact that they have ceased to practice the ordinances "once delivered to the saints" which were meant to teach brotherhood beginning with disciples, and a common life among disciples.

How do I explain the lack of these qualities in our church? Simply by the fact that our members have never understood their vital import. However, it is evident that though not understanding their purpose, yet by their reverent practice they have not wandered so far away. In the "popular" churches the membership no longer surrounds a common table symbolizing a common life. Nor do they believe in that common life. Much is said in the world to-day about the brotherhood of man. But the churches do not believe in it practically,—only as a theme on which to wax eloquent. Why? Because they are not practicing the ordinance Jesus Christ gave to teach it.

But some say that those things were for a civilization of an earlier and more barbarous age, but we are far beyond that now and do not need these ordinances to teach us these lessons.

Does the history of the church warrant that assertion? Does not the church

need it to-day? Churches claiming to represent Christ, dis severed and broken into factions, are a standing cry to God for these lessons of brotherhood and unity. Christians haughty, disdainful to the less fortunate and less favored, clad in the cloak of Pharisaical selfrighteousness, living a life of spiritual laziness, of practical infidelity to God and man, which seems all the worse by being called Christian, but living a most thorough and assiduously devoted life of fidelity to mammon, or Ambition, or Pleasure, are the shameful result of the apostasy from God, that teaches that men have advanced beyond the purpose of Christ in the *agapai*, or that they have already learned its lessons of brotherhood, equality and a common life of service.

The church has too long conceived its mission to be that of saving men out of an evil world, at the expense of the more important truth that it is pre-eminently the representative of Christ to make the world better.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The church seems to have forgotten that parable to a deplorable extent.

This ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ in those last, those full hours of his life to lead men to better lives and to teach them some of the lessons, of which the world's sin of selfish caste was, though unconsciously, a crying need. Jesus gave the wealth of his wonderful life to teach them. He came to destroy the works of the devil, the chief of which is selfishness. He came to reveal a common life among men. Such a life he lived. He came to teach men that if they possessed exceptional opportunities or talents, they should use them not for self, but for their less fortunate fellows. He came, the Son of God and shared his great life with benighted and besotted men. His life proclaims this. With this message his teaching is freighted. His miracles were tokens of love to cause men to live a better life. And his ordinances are such as induce men to live a life of service, of helpful equality and of sacred devotion to the securing of a common life filled with his great spirit of love.

To this purpose this ordinance is most fittingly adapted. In connection with its accompanying ordinance, feet-washing, it is one of the most impressive institutions Jesus left to teach humanity his lessons. If in any way men can be impressed with the idea of brotherhood and equality, it is when surrounding a common table, at

which all the false conditions of a selfish world are absent. If anywhere there is opportunity for the thought to rise in men's minds, that their lives should be sacrifices to their common humanity, it must be when around a common table at the conclusion of a common meal, they partake of the emblem of his body sacrificed for his fellowmen, and of his blood spilled by the selfish hate of truth, many times since his physical crucifixion Christ has been called upon to again ascend Calvary for the truth he taught, but each time he rises from his sepulchre of death to more splendid life, to broader and deeper revelations of truth to men, to a larger and more devoted following among the sons of men. In this ordinance of eternal truth and boundless promise he has been rejected of the churches of this day, but he comes once more asking men in this hour of divinest need of its rich lessons to accept it and learn its message.

There is need of such conceptions,—equality of men, commonness of life, sacrifice of the favored to the unfortunate. Men need to realize that the eating of Christ's body and the drinking of his blood is not an excuse for a selfish life, but a pledge to live Christ's kind of life.

The age that saw the church spread rapidly, the age in which the church appealed most truly to men's heroic devotion was one in which this long-neglected ordinance was observed for just these purposes.

If in the incipency of Christianity, in the moral darkness of that far distant civilization, Jesus' quality of life took such hold on men's hearts, amid the moral depravity of Rome, through such lessons taught by these Christ-given means, what would be the result on men's lives in our boasted civilization of a living, pulsing, spiritual observance of this same ordinance teaching these same unknown, but needed truths?

May God hasten the day when the Christians who observe them may understand their significance and put into practice their essence.

God speed the time when the churches of Christ humbled by their shame of failure and disgrace of disobedience to Christ may come back to him and with reverent effort again put in practice an ordinance so long neglected, but with such a wealth of possibility in its spiritual observance!

Here I am, Lord. Send me, send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough and savage pagans of the wilderness; send me from all that is called comfort in the earth; send me even to death itself, if it be but in Thy service and to promote Thy kingdom.—David Brainerd.